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Blood on their Hands – Official Murder in America

By RALPH SCHOENMAN

June 5, 1995, was the 27th anniversary of the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy and the publication date of Dan E. Moldea's book *The Killing of Robert F. Kennedy — An Investigation of Motive, Means and Opportunity*, (W.W. Norton, 342 pages, $27.50). Publicity material for the book proclaimed, "Here is*the* definitive book on Robert F. Kennedy's assassination, allowing this tragic chapter in our history to be put to rest at last."

Moldea concludes his book, "Sirhan Bishara Sirhan consciously and knowingly murdered Senator Robert Kennedy, and he acted alone." It is a thesis refuted by the very data he cites.

Hit by four bullets

The autopsy of Robert Kennedy by Coroner Thomas Noguchi shows, as Moldea must concede, that Kennedy was hit by four bullets — all of them from the *rear* and at contact range. The fatal shot was approximately one-half inch behind the mastoid bone of the skull, adjacent to Kennedy's right ear.

The convicted assassin, Sirhan Sirhan, was four feet away at the moment of firing, directly *in front* of Kennedy. Karl Uecker was standing between Sirhan and Kennedy. As the first shots rang out, Uecker jumped Sirhan, placing him in a head-lock and holding his gun-hand down. Sirhan could not have shot Robert Kennedy from the rear.

Five other people were wounded by the wild and random firing of Sirhan's 22 caliber Iver Johnson pistol. Bullets also entered three ceiling tiles. Other bullets lodged in the door frame and centerpiece of the swinging doors leading from the pantry.

These facts alone require more than one assailant.

Sirhan Sirhan's weapon held only eight bullets. In addition to the wounds to five people and the bullets lodged in the woodwork, there were the four which struck Kennedy from behind.

Meticulous examination of the bullets was conducted by distinguished criminalist William Harper, Dr. Robert J. Poling, then president of the American Academy of Forensic Science, and Herbert L. MacDonell of the Corning Laboratory. Their findings refute Moldea, demonstrating that the bullets in the five frontal victims do not match a bullet removed from Kennedy.

Auditory, oscillographic, and spectographic analyses of recordings of the shots led leading authority Dr. Michael Hecker to conclude that there were no fewer than ten gunshots. Evidence exists for twelve.

Why was Sirhan convicted?

Sirhan's lawyer, Grant Cooper, cut off Noguchi's testimony, which would have exculpated his client, with the remark "Spare us the gory details." He then proceeded to stipulate to Sirhan's sole guilt in the death of Kennedy.

LAPD criminalist DeWayne Wolfers presented what purported falsely to be test results from Sirhan's weapon. In fact, the police used surreptitiously someone else's weapon. Sirhan was sentenced to death on the basis of tests done on a weapon which was neither his nor used by anyone on June 5, 1968.

The California State Court of Appeals, in passing upon Wolfers' practice as LAPD chief criminalist, declared: "Wolfers gave false testimony bordering on perjury. ... His testimony on acoustics and anatomy was negligently false." Moldea, however, must uphold Wolfers' work to sustain his thesis of a lone assassin.

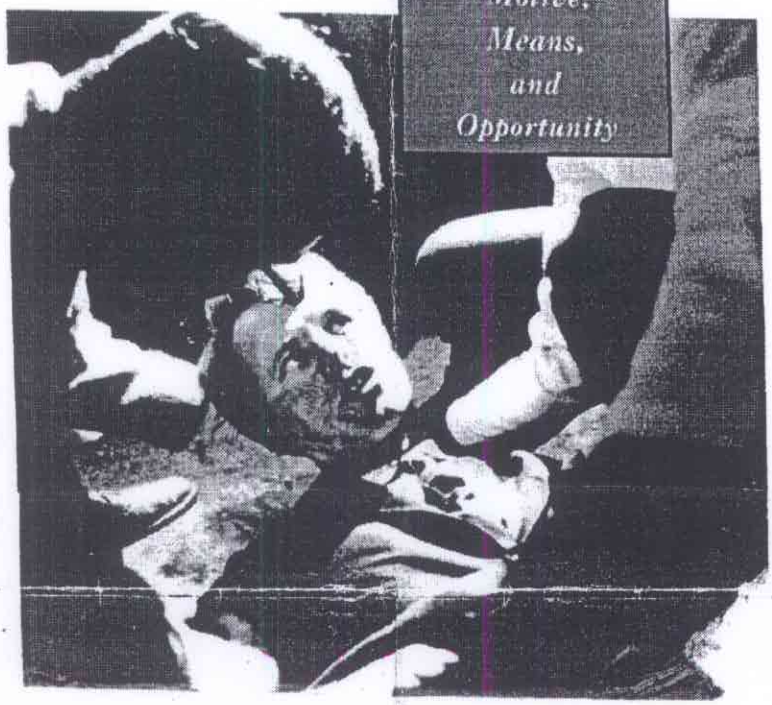
The LAPD destroyed 2400 photographs, negatives, and X-rays of vital evidence. They confiscated the door panels containing bullet holes and embedded bullets and the ceiling tiles with bullet holes — destroying everything, *even* the analysis and records of this evidence.

Special Unit Senator (S.U.S) was set up by the authorities to control the investigation, under the direction of Manuel Peña and Enrique "Hank" Hernandez. Months before returning to the LAPD, Peña ran a clandestine program for the CIA, training government death squads in Asia and Latin Amerca. (See "The Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy," by William Turner and John

THE KILLING OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY

DAN E. MOLDEA

An Investigation of Motive, Means, and Opportunity



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Christian, Random House, 1978.)

Hernandez, a polygraph operator, was a central figure in the CIA's "Unified Police Command" in Latin America, "interrogating" — i.e., torturing — opponents of brutal regimes. These two directors of S.U.S. literally terrorized all witnesses to the Robert Kennedy assassination who saw or heard evidence conflicting with the police thesis of Sirhan's sole guilt. Hernandez threatened people to change their testimony or suffer dire consequences.

The cover-up

Who fired the shots that killed Robert Kennedy? The only person whose position was compatible with the trajectory of the fatal shots is Thane Eugene Cesar, a Kennedy "guard," standing directly behind Kennedy and witnessed wielding and firing a weapon.

Cesar, although claiming to carry a 38 revolver, possessed, in fact, an Iver Johnson 22-caliber pistol, as did Sirhan, which Cesar claimed falsely to have sold six months before the assassination. It was disposed of three months *after* Kennedy's death, a critical lie which Moldea brushes aside.

Cesar's taped interview with investigative reporter Theodore Charach, whose film "The Second Gun" demolished the cover-up, reveals a bizarre guard for Robert Kennedy. Cesar supports "American-Nazi Party conclaves," adding that the Kennedys were "giving the country to the commies and the minority." Declaring his hatred for Blacks, Cesar calls for "a civil war in this country ... white against black. ... We're going to fight back. The white man is going to take it in his own hands."

Cesar, employed by Ace Security Service, was selected to guard Kennedy by the head of security at the Ambassador Hotel, William Gardner, who was seen distributing "an orange and black pamphlet" which read "Kill Kennedy!" Ambassador Hotel ownership is tied to mobster Mickey Cohen.

"Contract on America: The Mafia Murder of John F. Kennedy," by David E. Scheim (Shapolsky Books, 1988), documents Ace Security Service's links with U.S. National Bank of San Diego, a laundering vehicle for organized crime. Cesar was arrested in Tijuana, Mexico, after performing "jobs" for John "the Candyman" Alessio, a director of the conglomerate controlling U.S. National Bank.

Sirhan Sirhan worked at the Corona horse ranch, hired by "trainer" Frank Donner-oumas, who fled to New Jersey just before the assassination. His real name was Henry Ramistella, a mobster with a long rap sheet.

The Corona Ranch was owned by Desi Arnaz, but his friend Mickey Cohen called the shots. Sirhan's chief counsel, Grant Cooper, had mobster Johnny Rosselli's co-defendants as clients. Sirhan's other lawyer, Russell Parsons, a mob attorney, was investigated by the McClellan Rackets Committee, whose chief counsel was Robert Kennedy.

A stand-in?

How was Sirhan selected as an assassin? Sirhan has no recall of the murder of Robert Kennedy. The critical clue was his trance-like condition. His notebooks contain endless, mechanical, repetitive injunctions: "RFK must die."

Dr. Eduard Simson, the clinical psychologist who worked with inmates at San Quentin, interviewed and tested Sirhan for 20 weeks. He concluded that Sirhan's notebooks were either written under hypnosis or by someone else. Simson raised the question: "Was he merely a double, a stand-in sent there to draw attention?"

The answer provides the bridge to the CIA, for whom Mafia leaders have assumed assignments for many decades. For 23 years, the CIA has operated a mind-control program called Operation Artichoke. Like MKULTRA, a CIA mind-control program started by Allen Dulles in 1953, it was designed to test how an individual could be induced to assassinate, involuntarily, politicians or officials. Memory was eradicated and recall blocked.

These programs have been revealed in over 23,000 pages of released government documents to have been implemented against targets in countries across the world. As Malcolm X noted after the execution of John F. Kennedy, "The chickens have come home to roost."

Since the 1920s, organized crime has been deployed by the FBI to break strikes, terrorize the rank and file, and take control of trade unions. Franklin Roosevelt enlisted Jake and Meyer Lansky to coerce Batista to eliminate independent trade unions in Cuba.

Lucky Luciano was on official assignment from FDR and Naval Intelligence to control the waterfront during and after World War II. The Sicilian Mafia was funded and armed by the OSS and CIA to eliminate the workers' movement in Sicily and in Italy at large. Trade unionists, socialists and communists were marked for elimination.

It is a symbiosis of deep and longstanding

necessity to decisionmakers in the United States. These relationships have defined every administration for over 60 years. The state is the captive instrument of concentrated capital for maintaining control.

Intelligence agencies and all levels of police authority are the enforcement arm of this state power. Their partners in organized crime provide "deniability" when deployed in state terror, but their integral use has characterized *every* administration without missing a beat — sanctioned, directed and peopled by both the Democratic and Republican parties.

Why target the Kennedys?

Capitalism has been in acute crisis since the Great Depression. The New Deal did not solve it. Huge arms production put people to work for the merchants of death in America. The U.S. capitalist economy has been dependent on it ever since.

In the past 40 years, $9.3 trillion have gone to the Pentagon, exceeding the value of all other production in the United States. A vast military industrial complex derives huge profit from it.

By the end of the 1950s, Eastern capital was alarmed by the deficit financing and vast debt needed to sustain an arms-addicted economy. Rival capitalist currencies were challenging a dollar fast dropping in value.

The Kennedys came into office with the agenda of banking capital and the plans of Colonel James Gavin to combine U.S. special forces with indigenous troops to crush rebellion by the poor. It was counterrevolution on the cheap. This was played out in Laos in 1962, where U.S. death squads murderd 50,000 worker and peasant activists.

The killing of John F. Kennedy in a virtual *coup d'etat* permitted massive intervention in Indochina — and profits of $800 billion. The stakes were high. State control was needed to secure them.

Sectors of capital fall out perpetually over divisions of the spoils. The death of the Kennedy brothers, like that of Julius Caesar, flows from such combat over forms of investment and the means of their imposition. Captains of capital unite, however, in the official terror required to maintain their bloody rule.

The murders of Joe Hill, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King have a moral and class dimension profoundly different than such sordid maneuvers. Working people in America must organize independently to replace capital's ship of state, for it is revealed as a pirate vessel whose proper flag is a skull and crossbones.